

The A'Bear Family



A weekend gathering of nearly eighty family members took place on Saturday 4th May 2002 at Polehampton Junior School, Twyford, near Wargrave in Berkshire, with half of this number staying over until Sunday 5th May. Amongst them were cousins from South Africa, Canada and New Zealand.

The idea was conceived following a chance meeting of David F A'Bear (Ryde, Isle of Wight) and Mark A'Bear (Charvil, nr Reading) sixth cousins once removed, in Hare Hatch, Wargrave, in July 2001. The following nine months were spent seeking out and notifying all family members, gathering information, preparing presentations and agreeing Mark's family tree research with that of David's father, Stanley George A'Bear in the early 1980s.

Due to the unexpectedly high support for this event, original plans had to be altered. The venue was at first planned to be at the Conference Centre at Hill House, the family home, and Sunday lunch was to be at The Horse and Groom nearby, probably the family' local inn. It was also hoped there would be a tour of Hill House, but this was ruled out due to health and safety reasons.

In his welcome, David read e-mails from absent cousins, and explained that through the development of the internet, searching for records and people had become easier; this had regenerated interest in genealogy. It therefore seemed timely to display our information so that family members could check it and be aware of the research that had been done. Through the internet, two foreign branches of the family had recently been discovered living in South Africa and Canada, and it was hoped that others would be found in the future.

Talks were given by David Ford, a distant relative of the family, who had completed much research into our family history, Richard Lloyd of the Wargrave Local History Society, David and Mark A'Bear. These presentations covered our knowledge of the origins of the family name and probable early connections with the Delabere family, the Wargrave locality and the A''Bear family in Wargrave, the origins of the branches of the family as they now stand and their migration between the year 1700 and present times, family tree statistics and photographs of family properties and memorials.

Those attending brought a large amount of documentary evidence and photographs which were inspected and duplicated.

On Sunday the family attended church services at St Mary' Wargrave, and Waltham St Lawrence. After lunch at a nearby local inn there was an arranged sightseeing tour of the area, including Rocky Lane Farm and Rotherfield Peppard. The afternoon concluded with tea at "A'Bears Corner", a property in Milley Lane standing on land owned and farmed by the family for generations. Thanks were expressed to Mrs Pat Willett for her kind hospitality.

The weekend was declared a great success, and family members expressed the wish to keep in touch in future, and possibly organise another social gathering.

With acknowledgements to David A'Bear for this report. For further information about this family, there are two websites to visit:

www.dfab.freemove.co.uk/abear%20geneology.htm

www.mayfamilyhistory.co.uk/abear/